

## WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

**MONDAY** Samuel gathered the people and scolded them for rejecting God's direct rule over them (Theocracy) and preferring a king to reign over them. Nevertheless, he proceeded to give directions regarding the selecting of that king. To narrow down God's choice, Samuel went from tribe-to-family-to-individual, and the individual, of course was Saul. Saul was actually hiding when his kingship was announced but they found him and dragged him out before all the people – the first king of Israel!

### **I Samuel 10:17-23**

Isn't it amazing that in the same breath, Samuel scolds the people for rejecting God and then he goes ahead and selects the king for them! And is not Samuel wise! He already knew that Saul was God's choice to be king, but to just announce that Saul will be king might have appeared to the people to have been simply his own doing. By having all the tribes (or at least representatives of the tribes) lined up, everyone felt as if they had a chance. That was a terrific way to avoid criticism. We should always seek the wisdom that comes from God as we deal with the issues of life. God gives us the wisdom we need for problems in life. And for everything! If we just ask.

**TUESDAY** When Samuel announced that Saul was God's choice as king, the crowd cheered, "God save the king!" Samuel first explained exactly how this new king-thing would work. Then he sent the people home. One group of men went with Saul as he returned home. Some 'troublemakers' (same Heb. word is elsewhere translated *wicked men*) despised him, perhaps for the insignificance of his family and tribe.

### **I Samuel 10:24-27**

Notice that some men went with Saul while everyone else was going to his own house. Why did they go with Saul? Because God had touched their hearts! He touched their hearts to do their duty and protect and serve the king. Whatever good there is in us, it must be credited to God's work in us. If our hearts bend the right way at any time, it is God touching our hearts. One touch is enough when it's God's touch! We can say, "He touched me and made me whole. He touched me and put within me the desire to do His will." Oh, that we can say those words this day!

**WEDNESDAY** About 50 miles north of Gibeah where Saul lived, the Ammonites, an enemy army, lay siege to Jabesh. The citizens offered a truce, evidently willing to pay a tribute, and maybe have a few citizens taken as slaves, just to have the Ammonites go away. But the enemy's tribute was high: everyone's right eye! The people asked for time to consider the offer, and immediately sent word of their dilemma to Saul in Gibeah.

### **I Samuel 11:1-4**

The Ammonites are barbaric. They are not content with tribute, slaves, and even blood. They demand what no one would agree to give. Their insolence produced the demand and explains why they were willing to give the citizens time. From where did these insolent Barbarians come? From Israel's disobedience. From the days of Joshua when God told Israel to destroy them completely, and Israel disobeyed and left the job half done, and therefore un-done. Disobedience often comes back to us. *Behold, thy sins*

*shall find thee out.* God wants and deserves our complete obedience.

**THURSDAY** Saul came in from the fields and heard the people weeping (they had just heard the news about the Ammonites' siege of Jabesh). God's spirit energized him! He called for all Israel to go to the defense of Jabesh, and, just in case some were thinking that they would not bother with the whole thing, he sent pieces of cut-up oxen as a visible threat of what would happen to those tribes who did not participate. 300,000 fighting men responded to Saul's call, and prepared to attack the Ammonites.

### **I Samuel 11:5-8**

Saul is a great picture of humility. Although already anointed as king, he still went out in the fields to check on the sheep! Returning home, he demonstrated genuine concern for his neighbors. Hearing about the threat to the people of Jabesh (remember the threat? An enemy king planned to thrust out the right eye of everyone), Saul became angry. It was a holy fire that burned in Saul's heart – a righteous anger. When we are angry at the same things God is angry at, our anger is righteous. We ought to be angry at anything which takes from His glory or slanders His name! Angry enough to stay far away from it ourselves!

**FRIDAY** Saul sent word to the citizens of Jabesh that help was on the way. With his army of 300,000 he marched to Jabesh, attacked the Ammonites in the early morning, and destroyed their army. Every one of them still living is described as "fighting alone for his own life".

### **I Samuel 11:9-11**

Saul was just a farmer's kid. But even if he had attended 'the West Point of ancient Israel', he could not have done a better job of leading the army! How did he do such a dynamic job? Because the Spirit of God had come upon him! When God's Spirit comes upon a person, He prepares us and equips us for whatever it is that God has for us. *It's not I but Christ* (thru the Holy Spirit) *who lives in me*, the Apostle wrote. That's our testimony, too! God in me! What does God want to do through you today? Trust Him to do so, and allow the Spirit of God to lead and strengthen you.

**SATURDAY** After such a glorious victory, some of the people remember those who initially opposed Saul being their king. Now they want to punish them for that. But Saul would hear none of it. He gave all the credit for the victory to God. Samuel suggested a way for these hesitant ones to express their loyalty to Saul – by having a second coronation ceremony for him at Gilgal. The ceremony takes place, and this time, the whole nation participates gladly.

### **I Samuel 11:12-15**

In these early days, we see not only humility but also wisdom in Saul. Fresh off a great victory, he could easily rid his kingdom of all those who were less than excited to have him as king. But Saul chose to rise above such petty stuff and, in doing so, united the country under his leadership. He saw the "bigger picture" and acted on it. For us, the bigger picture is always eternity! Let us remember that God is working for eternity. Let's keep our eyes on that! Live today with eternity in view!